

# SONORA COMMUNITY HOSPITAL



November 27, 1995

Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development  
Health Policy and Planning Division  
1600 Ninth Street Room 400  
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Sirs:

Sonora Community Hospital supports this effort to assess the quality of health care provided to California. We appreciate the opportunity to review and comment on the 1994 report of the California Hospital Outcomes Project. However, we feel caution should be used in drawing conclusions from a report which utilizes coding of patient charts as the source of information to assess the quality of care. Coding is performed by nonclinical personnel after the patient is discharged and much is left to be interpreted by the coder.

In addition to this concern there are a number of other factors which we believe need to be considered in evaluation the results of this study:

1. Small hospitals often have so few patient in the categories studied that results are not statistically significant and the results reported could be due to chance rather than the quality of care provided.

2. Of the twelve reported myocardial infarctions resulting in death at our hospital, 2 were 70 - 79 years of age, 7 were 80 - 89 years of age and 2 were over 90 years of age. Patients in this age group frequently have documented Advanced Directives. The refusal of heroic measures in preventing death is a personal choice that does not reflect on a hospital's quality of care. The myocardial infarction study did not include consideration of the patient's choice in exercising their right to self determination. Of the twelve deaths reported from our facility 6 had "no aggressive measures" documented in the chart. Another patient who survived resuscitative measures was later removed from life support at the request of the family.

3. Our final concern with the overall value of the data is the overlapping time frame. Some of the cases are reported in 1993 and again in 1994. This methodology is confusing and could be misinterpreted as additional complications.


Again, thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the study prior to publication.

Sincerely,



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Michael E. Fitzpatrick, M. D.  
Quality Assurance Chairman  
Sonora Community Hospital



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Lary A. Davis, President  
Sonora Community Hospital